WATERWAYS OF FOREIGN LANDS

How Europe is Deepening Its Rivers and Digging Canals.

IN GERMANY AND RUSSIA

The Dutch Canal System and how it is Managed—A Tour Through South Holland—The Boat People and How They Live.

(Special Correspondence of the Times-Dispatch, Copyright 1903.)

ROTTERDAM, Jan. 29.—This is the age of railroads. It promises also to be the age of canals. Water transportation is still cheaper than any other, and the European nations are deepening their rivers and constructing canals to join their waterways. It is only a question of time when the United States will do the same, and when we shall have ship canals joining some of the principal parts of our country.

I came from Antwerp to Rotterdam by boat to learn something about the canals of the Dutch, and since then I have visited their waterways in the north. Holland is the canal land of the world. It has more interior waterways than any region except the Yangtse Kiang valley about Shanghai, Hangchow and Soochow. It is, all told, only about as big as Massachusetts, but if you could stretch its navigable waterways out in one straight line they would carry you from New York to San Francisco and almost back to Chicago before you got to the end of them. There are in all about two thousand miles of other waterways, including little rivers and the mouths of the Scheldt and Rhine, and also the Zuyder Zee and other places where the northern ocean runs into the land.

Indeed, there is so much water here that one of the most important duties of the Government is taking care of it. The Government has a department known as The Waterstaat, and the queen has in her cabinet a minister of waterways. This department has some of the best of civil engineers. It has men who devote themselves to studying how to keep the North Sea from rushing in and drowning out the country, for almost one-half of Holland is below the level of the ocean, so that in some places, the fishes outside swim high above the thatched house roofs. It has men who are engaged in planning and building ship canals, such as the mighty waterways which connect Amsterdam with the ocean, and it has others who are scheming how to build a great dyke across the Zuyder Zee to redeem as much land as a good-sized Texas county, which, when redeemed, will be worth hundreds of dollars an acre.

This undertaking is for a time in abeyance, but there is no doubt that it will eventually be carried out. The Dutch have done much of such reclamation in the past. About fifty years ago, they lifted a billion tons of water out of the region near Haarlem, and made seventy square miles of good farming land. It cost them more than a million and a half of dollars, but the land was worth it. In another place they have redeemed 41,000 acres at a cost of about four million dollars and as soon as the work was done, a foreign syndicate offered them $2,000,000 for the property as a whole. The Government refused this offer, and eventually got several hundred thousand dollars more than it cost to make the improvement.

As to the Zuyder Zee scheme, this is a bigger one than any that has yet been undertaken. It is estimated that it will cost over $75,000,000, but it will result in the reclamation of a vast tract of land. The work will take thirty-three years and the taxes on the land recovered will then bring in $4,000,000 a year to the Government, making the matter a good long-time investment. At present, the Government is afraid of it, and although all the plans have been completed, no work has been actually done.

IN THE ISLANDS OF ZEELAND.

Have you ever heard of Zeeland? It is the southwestern province of Holland, consisting of the Scheldt and the Maas, formed by the silt brought down by these rivers. The most of the province isc below sea level, being protected against the ocean by mighty dykes. It was through this province that I came from Antwerp to Rotterdam on the little steamboat Telegraf III.

As I rode down the Scheldt I passed the Kroonland of our own American line moving up with a cargo from New York for Antwerp, and a little later on came in sight of the dykes. Near the Dutch boundary the river is walled with stone held between piles. We rode high above the rest of the country, and could see the roofs of the barns and houses even with the top of the dykes. On the opposite side the trees showed out like bushes over the wall which extended on and on up the river as far as our eyes could reach. We passed the great forts that guard this entrance to Europe, and went on through a flat country on the edge of the sea. At times we could see the fields beyond the walls with the cattle feeding upon them. Long lines of trees marked out the road which seemed to be reaching over the landscape, making me think of Macbeth's words coming to Dunsinane.

A BIG DUTCH CANAL.

We soon left the Scheldt and passing through locks came into the canal of South Beveland. This is one of the largest canals of southern Holland. It is wide and high banked, and so straight that the tugs and barges which fill it grow smaller and smaller and finally block the canal in the distance.

The locks are old fashioned. They are moved by hand by quaint old Dutchmen in caps, roundabouts and fat pantaloons. At every lock Dutch girls brought out fruit and knickknacks to sell to the passengers. They were pretty girls and I liked their quaint costumes. They wore short skirts, white clogs and black stockings. Several had on bright vests and two had horns of gold over each of their eyes, the horns twisted around in the shape of a miniature old fashioned bed spring. Three others had gold or silver helmets fitted tight to their heads, showing out through their lace caps. They laughed as we dealt with them, but invariably got the best of the bargain.

HORSE-POWER, MAN-POWER AND STEAM.

Most of the craft of this canal is carried along by tugs, although some barges are pulled by men and women and others by horses. So far but little electricity has been applied to these canals, although this matter is seriously considered by the Dutch. At every few steps along the way are posts for tying the boats and we now and then passed boats at anchor.

Leaving the South Beveland canal we entered the Ooster Scheldt, a sort of branch of the sea, and then went on between the islands of Dutveland and Tholen into the Maas canal. The waters of the Ooster Scheldt are wide and spotted with islands. We passed many sailing craft and now and then went by a tug towing great barges. With the glass we could see schools of black seals on the sand flats, and farther back hundreds of Holstein cattle lying out in the sun.

We entered the Hollandische Diep and then the canals and mouths of the Maas, now going by villages on the banks, and now seeing the second stories of other village houses which were apparently looking over the dykes and watching us go by.

AMONG THE BOAT PEOPLE.

The Dutch canals are almost as thickly populated as the waterways of China. Every barge we passed had its family upon it, an evidence of the thousands of Dutch families which live and die upon boats. Babies are born upon them, and many have no other homes. We frequently saw children trotting up and down the roofs of the barges within six inches of drowning, and now and then a little one tied with a rope to the mast. On many of the boats the women were cooking; on some they were hanging out the washing, and on one a little Dutch girl held up her doll baby and laughed as we went by.

Every village along the canal had its own boats tied to the banks, and the larger towns were cut up by canals so that boats from the main canals could be taken into them by means of locks.

We stopped for a time at Dordrecht, which in the middle ages was one of the richest of all the Dutch cities. It had palaces at that time, and its buildings now are medieval and quaint to an extreme. Just below the city there is a lumber yard at which barges of American lumber were unloading. I noted the name of the firm. It was Dubbledam, an evidence that the lumber men of Holland can compete in profanity with our men at home.

In many places along these canals there were dredges at work, and here and there we saw the ojcers of the Waterstaat superintending the building of new embankments. The canals are almost everywhere walled with stones, the size of your two fists, and as I looked at them the enormous work that must have taken to make 2,000 miles of such canals came to me. There are no stones in Holland. Every pebble has to be brought in from other countries, and every one of those stones was laid by hand. Each one took a part of a man's life to put it in its place, so that in reality the lives of generations have been swallowed up by these canal banks.

You have all heard of the windmills of Holland? They are to be seen everywhere. Along some of the canals there are hundreds of them. They spot the farms and you see them on the edge of the towns ,where they grind flour, saw lumber and do all sorts of things. They give a great charm to the landscape. They look so alive that I don't wonder that Don Quixote took one for a giant and wanted to fight him. These mills are all old, and it muse have cost many millions of dollars to build them. Their day, however, is past, and but few new ones are building. The gas engine and the steam engine have taken their places, and we may yet have a Holland without windmills.

Holland has made its ship canals pay well. Amsterdam has the North Sea Canal, which is about fifteen miles long, running across the country from Amsterdam to the ocean. It is thirty feet deep and has two enormous locks which protect it from the North Sea at high tide. I took a ride along it a week ago and inspected the breakwaters at its entrance. The work is well done, but the locks do not compare with those of the Sault Ste. Marie between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. The canal cost about $16,000,000, of which one fourth was paid by the sale of the reclaimed land, which brought an average price of almost $500 an acre.

This town of Rotterdam is a city of canals and canalized rivers. The mass has been so dredged that it now permits the largest of ocean ships to come into Rotterdam, and the connections with the Rhine and other parts of Europe are such that this city has become one of the chief ports on the continent. It is one of our principal gateways for northern Europe, surpassing Antwerp in its importations of American products. Antwerp, as far as the figures go, has the greater tonnage, but much of its tonnage is made up of ships which merely touch there, while that of Rotterdam is composed of ships which take on and discharge cargo. Rotterdam has about half as much shipping as Hamburg and about one-third that of Liverpool or London. The shipping is steadily increasing, and it now comprises lines to all parts of the world. In 1900 there were about 600 ships from the United States. This is not one-tenth of the whole number that came here, but they carried almost one-third of the cargo that year. The chief of these ships are those of the Holland-American line, which go from Rotterdam direct to New York, and have been doing so since 1900. These ships are first-class passenger steamers, some of them being 12,000 tons and over.

Rotterdam is our gate to the Rhine and to the enormous country tributary to it. Our goods are here transshipped into the huge barges, from 200 to 300 feet long, in which they are carried up the Rhine. The river freights are exceedingly low and the Rhine trade is enormous. About one-half of all the goods that come into Holland go through Rotterdam up the Rhine to different parts of Germany, Switzerland and France, the number of river ships and boats which carry them being something like 110,000 annually. There are canals connecting the Rhine with the Elbe with the Danube and also the Oder and the Vistula with that river, so that in the future it will be possible to send our goods to almost any part of Europe by water.

Seine and the Elbe. The barges go as far north as Bassel and some of them are taken up the Main to the Danube, so that Rotterdam is actually the center point of a network of waterways which embraces almost all central Europe.

HOW ROTTERDAM BOOMS.

The increase of the Rhine trade has given Rotterdam great prosperity. It had about 200,000 people in 1890. It now has almost 350,000, and it is growing like a green bay tree. It is steadily increasing its shipping facilities. It has built a new harbor, which is over a mile long and 1,000 feet wide, and has another harbor in course of construction which will be 2,000 feet long, 1,000 feet wide and twenty-six feet deep. When the present improvements are completed Rotterdam will have twenty-five miles of quays. It has already over twenty miles and more than thirty-two acres of sheds and warehouses for its ocean shipping. This all belongs to the municipality. The city has put up eighty steel cranes which will lift from 1,500 to 65,000 pounds each, and it has hydraulic coal lifts which will move 200 tons of coal per hour at a cost of four cents per ton. In every respect the shipping facilities are of the best.

BIG CANAL SCHEMES.

I am surprised at the work the Europeans are doing in making canals. have been pretty well over the continent within the past few years. Nearly every country is improving its waterways. Russia is planning a canal from St. Petersburg and the Baltic to the Black Sea, which will be thirty feet deep and able to accommodate the largest of the ocean steamers. The canal system will probably be extended eventually to the Northern ocean, so that the whole country will be accessible by water. The chief rivers of Russia are already connected by canals, and it is possible to go from St. Petersburg to the Caspian sea by boat.

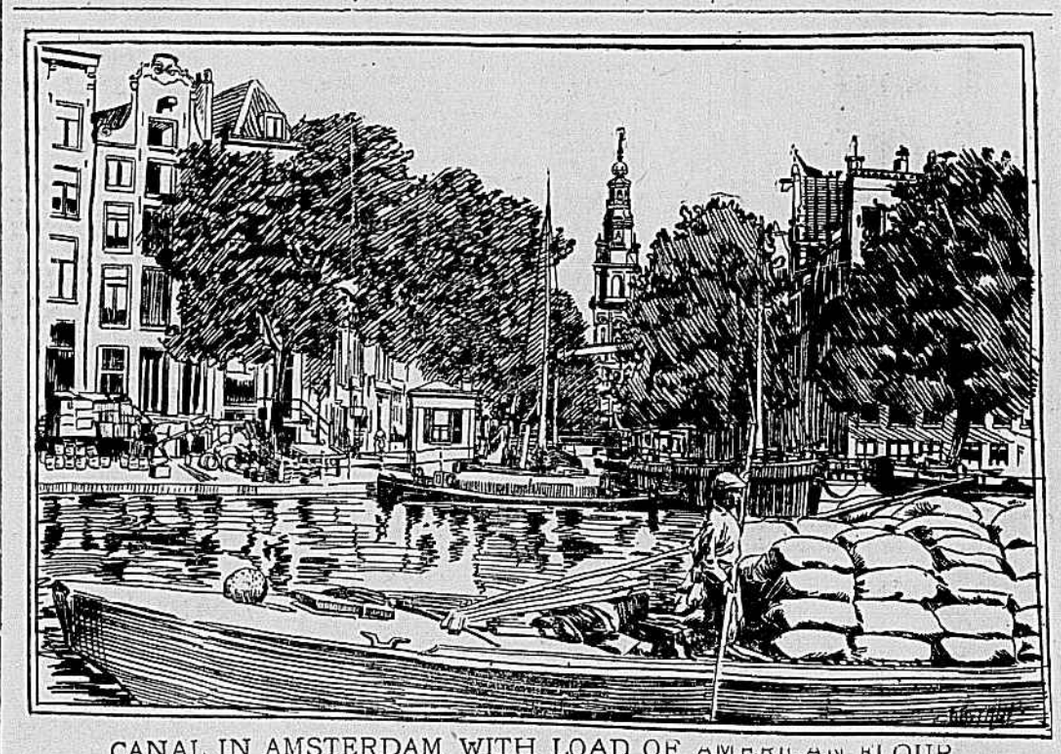
Germany has for years been spending an enormous amount on deepening its rivers and building canals, and it has one of the best canal systems of Europe. Goods can be taken from Hamburg to Berlin and almost to the sources of the Elbe by boat. There are canals connecting the Elbe and the Oder, and the canal which has been built to join the coal and iron regions about Dortmund to the North sea will eventually be extended to embrace the Rhine, the Weser and the Elbe.

The Germans want to standardize their canal system, if possible, so that barges carrying a thousand tons can be taken to any part of the country. They use wide barges on the principle that it is easier to make a wide canal than a deep one.

At present the canals of eastern Germany seem to be favored over those of the west, the port of Stettin complaining that the Prussian Government will not give it the canal facilities which it needs to compete with Hamburg. It is much nearer and naturally more accessible to Berlin than any of the ports of the west, but so far the western ports are getting the trade.

As it is now Hamburg handles about one-half of all the comerce of Germany, and goods can be shipped from there up the Elbe as far as Prague in Bohemia.

You can go by boat from Rotterdam to the Rhine and by canal to Paris. You can also go to Vienna by way of the Rhine, the Main and the canals into the Danube and thence on to the Black sea, or you can connect by canals with other rivers which will take you to almost any part of northern Europe. Among the canals projected are some connecting the



CANAL IN AMSTERDAM WITH LOAD OF AMERICAN FLOUR.

Not a Remote Possibility.

Wouldn't it make the Republican party tired if Grover Cleveland should be elected President for the third time?—Memphis Commercial-Appeal.

A Lurking Suspicion.

There are those of us who very much suspect that Hon. Hoke Smith is at least the first assistant engineer of the Parker movement in these parts.

His Americanism.

Aguinaldo shows his advance in our requirements of civilization by asking for an appropriation. "The old flag and an appropriation" is distinctively American.—Montgomery Advertiser.

Neck and All.

Another eminent colored statesman from Texas, known as "Goose Neck Bill" McDonald, is on the way to Washington to advise with the President on southern affairs, notes an exchange. Some Texas Congressmen ought to lend Bill a second-hand dress suit and let him wade right into White House society. His color is all right.—Atlanta Journal.

THE RESURRECTION OF TORM. A LEGEND OF CHOTANK.

By C. CONWAY BAKER.

The Potomac, making a sweeping bend northward, and then an equally determined curve southward, some fifty miles below Washington, forms a long, pointed neck of land on the Virginia side. The soil of this portion of the State is rich and fertile, and, in Ante-Bellum days, was divided into large and prosperous plantations, constituting, as is usual in the Old Dominion, a distinct community, with its own peculiarities and its own particular name.

Chotank, as this section was, and, for aught I know, is called, had its proper share of individual distinctions. It was celebrated for its fine corn crops, and its rich wheat fields, but more especially for its unrivalled mint-beds. Strangers who visited the hospitable home of its denizens, crushed the fragrant plant beneath their feet, as they fastened their horses to the old-fashioned racks. In those days a person who was minus a mint-bed, or short of the natural and time-honored accessories of that herb, would have been pretty certain of social ostracism at the hands of Chotankers.

Although so near the Capital City, Chotank was a distinctively rural community, and, although distinctively rural in dress, manners, and speech, it was aggressively aristocratic. There were few among them who did not claim descent from the blue-blooded Cavaliers, who were Knights of the Horseshoe, and he who could not trace his own pedigree, and that of his horse back to some mythical period, "whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," was regarded as a proper object of suspicion.

Among the Chotankers who claimed the highest bred men, women and hrses, were the Dades. As Thomas Dade, commonly called "Torm," who was the wealthiest head of the most unadulterated branch of the Clan, said at a family reunion, speaking with a sparkling julep in hand. "Here's to the Dades—before Adam was, we are." Which sentiment was universally drank with great gusto.

"Torm' was a typical planter of the old days. Round-faced, jovial-featured, and portly, with a high temper, and an autocratic will, he carried things with a high hand. Only two people had ever been found on his plantation with sufficient hardihood to contradict him. One of these was his only sister, Ellen, and the other, his body-servant, Dave. Ellen's audacity was due party to the persistent system of spoiling to which Torm had subjected her during childhood, and partly to the fact that she was his own sister, in point of temperament. Dave's was due to the fact that Torm honestly believed he was the only nigger in Virginia who could compose a julep properly, and Dave's own knowledge of this conviction. In the matter of juleps, Dave was as autocratic as Torm himself, leaving his master only the privilege of picking the mint. As was natural, Tom was popular. He kept open house, and boasted the best brandy and the finest foxhounds in Tidewater Virginia.

"By G—— sir!" he was in the habit of saying, "That spotted bitch, Music, will run a fox to hell, but what she'll have him.' Upon which Dave, who was a leading exhorter, would observe, "Jes' lissen to dat now! When dat ole fox houn' Satten done run you dar, who gwine mix yo' juleps?"

But, at the time I write of, all Chotank was a-quiver with excitement, and the Dade contingent was at fever heat.

Ellen had encouraged the attentions of Buck Peyton, a rising young lawyer at the county seat, and Tom had forbidden him the house. Peyton's pedigree was beyond reproach, even in Chotank, and his prospects were as bright as those of any man in the Northern Neck, but he had had the misfortune to represent an hereditary enemy of the Dades, a few years before in a case involving the title to certain land in Passapatanzy to which Torm laid claim. What was worse, he had won the case, and Torm, with the usual prejudice of a choleric autocrat, had regarded him as a personal enemy ever since.

Peyton and Ellen, however had met frequently at the houses of mutual friends, and their acquaintance, fanned perhaps by Torm's hostility, had soon ripened into a warmer feeling.

When Ellen, seated on Torm's knee one evening, announced to him with her usual audacious nonchalance, that she had been proposed to by Buck Peyton, and had accepted him, a stormy scene ensued. After having been threatened with an apoplectic fit, Torm asserted his prerogative as nearest of kin and guardian, and forbade the proposed union in terms which my religion forbids me to chronicle. Ellen, with her queenly little head thrown back, and her brown eyes flashing—"for all de worl' lek dat Vixen o'hern," as Dave said, declared her intention of marrying the man of her choice, in the face of all the opposition in the world.

"I'll shoot the puppy!' roared Torm. "If you do, I'll shoot you,' replied his spirited sister, in a tone which implied she meant what she said.

Torm marched out into the big hall, slamming the door violently—ordered an extra strong julep, and cursed Dave with painstaking and ornate verbosity, as he prepared it.

"Fore Gawd, Marse Torm!" expostulated Dave. "You know dat ain' no way to 'spress yo'se'f to de Lawd's 'nointed." "The Lord's anointed!" shouted Torm. "You black-skinned son of the devil! And, here, if I ever catch you carrying a note or a message between Nell and that scoundrel Peyton, I'll cowhide you from here to Matthias' Point."

"S'pose Miss Ellen give me one to cyar'," said Dave, "What I gwine do?" A vigorous kick sent him flying out of the back door, with such momentum that he landed in a sitting posture by one of the cellar windows. "Name o' Gawd Dave!" exclaimed his wife Mandy, rushing from the arch to the window aforesaid. "Is you done kilt yo'se'f? "No," he rejoined, but "I'se done bin kicked speechless. I 'clar' 'fore Gawd, Marse Torm's wuss'n a harrycane. 'Twix' him an' Miss Ellen, I done come up thoo' much triberlashun, an' done wash my robes in de blood o' de sheep. Marse Torm boun' for torment, sut'ny."

And, with this pleasing reflection, he crept back in the hall, and solaced h - self with a tremendous pull at the brandy bottle.

The next morning, Buck Peyton, as in duty bound, rode over to Panorama, Torm's place, to formally ask his consent. Knowing Torm's temper, Buck did not anticipate any pleasant reception; but he was not the man to shirk any duty, however unpleasant, and there was a very determined set to his shoulders as he loped his big bay up to the outer gate.

To his surprise, Dave, who was standing just inside the gate, did not offer to open it for him.

"Open the gate, Dave," he said. "I want to see Mr. Dade. Is he at home?"

"Don' go in dar, Marse Buck, don' go in dar! Dar's de devil to pay at Panirammare to-day," answered Dave.

"Open the gate, you black rascal," said the young lawyer impatiently. "Do you suppose I am afraid of the devil?"

This was Dave's opportunity. Having mixed six juleps for the perturbed Torm that morning, and taken as many pulls of the straight article himself, he was in a peculiarly religious frame of mind. "Now jes' hear dat," he groaned. "Marse Buck, you ev'ry bit in grain ez bad ez Marse Torm he'se'f, whar is 'livered into de han's uv de 'stroyer. Bein' a chid o' Gawd myse'f.——"

"Open that gate," exclaimed Buck, "And stop that rot, you drunken——" "Drunk!" snorted the negro, "Drunk!" Fore Gawd, I ain seen a drap sence Gawd——

"Oh Jesus, Marse Buck!" he yelled, dodging the young lawyer's riding-whip. "Here's a note Miss Nell tole me to give you."

Buck read the not, sitting there on his horse, with the early June sunshine falling on his manly form and handsome, intellectual face. It gave a short account of the manner in which Torm had received the news of their engagement, and urged him not to come to Panorama until things had quieted somewhat.

It concluded with an assurance of loving fidelity, and a cheerful declaration that the writer had never failed to get her way with her guardian, in the end. Buck smiled at this, remembering the pretty, imperous ways of his lady-love.

Nothing is ever a secret long in a neighborhood like Chotank, where every-neighborhood like Chotank, where wxdd body is everybody else's cousin, more or less removed, and, so, as I have said, Chotank was in a fever of excitement.

Torm filled the house with the heaviest drinkers, fastest riders and most persistent poker-players of his acquaintance, and Ellen sulked and pouted. Dave was mixing juleps, and, on the sly, drinking them, until Mandy predicted "Mania a potu," and threatened to have him "churched."

Buck Peyton practiced his profession, and lived as usual, cheered by occasional glimpses of his divinity, at Lamb's Creek Church, where Torm, re-enforced by his timid little wife, guarded her like a soldier on duty.

It was a battle of two strong wills at Panorama in those days, and Ellen grew thin and pale, while Torm's waistcoat increased in circumference, and his nose became like unto the rising sun. He and Dave waged wordy war from early morn to dewy eve, and the latter, under the influence of his protracted potations, became pious to a wierd and awful degree. He had just assured the scornful Mandy that he had attained spiritual perfectibility, when Torm after an unusually stormy scene with Ellen, was seized with a fit, during which he died.

The doctor, being hastily summoned, pronounced it apoplexy, and declared that nothing else could have been expected from Torm's convivial habits and choleric temperament.

Torm's mammy came up from the far quarters, bewailing the death of "her boy," and she and Mandy shrouded him for burial, and bore him, with Dave's help, down the long, narrow passage way to what was known as the "West rooms." Panorama was a large, square, brick house, flanked on either side by a narrow brick passage, leading to a square office-like, two story, structure, containing two upper and two lower rooms. These wings were known as the "East" and "West" rooms. In the further of the "West rooms," poor Torm was laid in state, to await his burial. His sudden death was a terrible shock to Ellen, coming as it did, just after an angry altercation, but the girl, who was full of native nobility of character, smothered her own grief, and sought to administer consolation to his lymphatic little wife. But the little woman turned upon her like a fury, and poured out a torrent of hot reproaches upon her, accusing her of being his murderer.

Surprised and shocked at this exhibition of spirit in one whom she had long regarded as more of a lay figure than anything else; and full of that vague and reasonless remorse and self-reproach we all feel more or less, when suddenly parted by death from one whom we love; but with whom we have been angry, Ellen wandered off to the old nursery in the upper part of the West wing, and, after hours of fruitless grief and weeping, dropped into a deep, dreamless sleep. About this time, George Grimes, Dick Hunter, Bob Cleve, and two other young men, intimate friends of the departed Torm, arrived for the purpose, as was usual in those days, of "sitting up" with the body of the deceased.

Dave, solemnly and dignifiedly drunk, escorte dthem to the "West rooms," and paloed chairs and lounges for them in the room next the one in which his late master lay in state. After the usual look at the deceased, these gentlemen took their seats in the adjoining room, and the old darkey, having delivered a powerful and impressive homily on the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death, winding up with an assurance that "Marse Tom was now in Glory," took his departure.

The usual silence fell upon the group, which falls upon any crowd of men left together under similar circumstances. Then it was broken by George Grimes remarking, in a carefully subdued tone, that Torm was an "extra good fellow," and this opened the way for a series of laudatory anecdotes regarding him, as a farmer, hunter, neighbor, and last, but not least, poker-player. At last, when the stock of eloquence was exhausted, and a dull, heavy silence threatened to envelope them, Bob Cleve cleared his throat, and remarked:

"Look here, gentlemen, this is a sad, dull business, sitting up with the corpse of our departed friend. We all know what a d——, I mean, what a fine fellow he was. No man enjoyed a quiet, social game of draw more than he did, and no one ever played a finer hand. I feel sure that if he were living, he would be in for a game to-night, and, as I said, it's er—rather a dull business this, and er—I really don't think he would take it the least amiss, if he could know it, if we were to pass the time with a little game of dollar limit."

"Very True," returned Grimes, "but where is the deck to come from? We can't ask for it very well." Cleve looked a little sheepish. "Well, you see," he said, rather hesitatingly, "I er—knew—that is, I happen to have a stray deck with me."

In spite of the solemnity of the occasion, a few furtive smiles passed between his companions; but, nevertheless, in a few moments, they were gathered around the table, and deep in the mysteries of their favorite amusement. So absorbed did Torm's friends become that they lost sight of the fact that they were supposed to be watching the corpse, and in short, forgot all about the passage of time itself. In fact, the first beams of the morning sun were stealing through the shutters when Bob Clev sprang to his feet and raked his winnings into his pocket.

"By the holy pokers, gentlemen!" he exclaimed, "We've overdone this thing: Blow that lamp out, Grimes, while I step into the next room to see how poor Torm is getting on."

But, in a moment, he came back, his usually ruddy-face as white as the wall. "Great God!" he stuttered, "He's gone!" "Gone!" echoed the others, springing to their feet.

"What do you mean?"

"Torm!" Torm!" he gasped, "The corpse! It's gone." With one accord, they rushed into the adjoining room.

Sure enough, the corpse had disappeared!

They stood there in silence for a moment, gazing from one to the other with white, guilty faces. At last, Dick Hunter spoke.

"Well, I'll be d——d!" he said.

At this moment, Dave appeared in the open doorway.

When he saw their white faces, and the empty bed, his own skin became ashy, and his knees smote together.

"W——whar Marse Torm?" he gasped. "Dave," said George Grimes, and his voice quavered. "Dave, he's gone! What does it mean, gentlemen?" he continued, appealing to the others, who only gazed at him blankly in reply.

"Somebody done stole Marse Torm, body an' soul," cried Dave in a terrified whisper. "Twuz Satten, fur sho'. I done tole him."——

"Shut up, you black scoundrel!" said Cleve.

"Suppose he wasn't dead after all," suggested Grimes eagerly.

Dave's dusky face brightened. "Dar now!" he cried. "Fore Gawd!" I b'lieve you done struck it, Marse George!" Then, glancing at the clock, he exclaimed. "Ef Marse Torm ain dead, I knows whar he is.

"Foller me." And he dashed out of the door, followed by the excited men, one of whom unconsciously upset a candle as he went.

Dave led them rapidly across the lawn, in the direction of an old brick laundry.

Behind this was the Panorama mint-bed, and knee deep in the fragrant herb, stood the redoubtable Torm, a little paler than usual, but with a jovial smile on his face, and enough mint in his hands to make juleps for a week. Whereupon, Dick Hunter said again, "Well, I'll be d——d!"

"You see friends," said Torm, "That fit of mine didn't prove so fatal as that infernal sawbones, Mitchell thought. I just went off into some kind of trance—at any rate, I didn't know anything until about half an hour ago. —— came to myself, I found myself sewed up in this damned night-gown, "flirting the tail of his shroud contemptuously, "with candles burning at my head and feet. At first, I didn't know what to make of it, but it gradually came to me that I had been laid out for burial.' Begad! it sent goose pimples up my spine at first, and I was about to roar out for Dave, when I heard voices in the next room. Thinks I to myself, "I'll find out how my friends are bearing my untimely end; so I arose and crept to the door and peeped in on ye."

At this point, there were evidence of confusion on the part of his hearers. Tom laughed.

"Never mind!" he said reassuringly "Gad! I should have done the like myself. Well, as the sun was nearly up, and I had no desire to disturb that last Jack Pot—I could see Grimes held an ace full—I slipped out of the window, and came down here as I do every morning, after mint."

His friends crowded around him, with raptuous congratulations, while Dave, the first effects of his joy at his master's restoration, having subsided, was inclined to improve the occasion by a pious exhortation.

"'Fore Gawd, Marse Torm," he said, "Ef you ain' de heades' man I uver see!" Here you is jes' 'scaped torment, an' gittin' mint fer juleps. You orter be down on yo' narrer bones, "turnin' thanks."

"Go to the devil!" vociferated his master. "Take this mint, you black scoundrel, and mix us our juleps quick, or I'll skin you alive."

Dave took the fragrant herb with a look of pious horror, and disappeared around the laundry, in the direction of the mansion. As Torm and his companions were preparing to follow him, he reappeared however, his eyes bulging with terror.

"Fore Gawd, Marse Torm!" he yelled. "De wos' room's afire!"

It was indeed so. It will be remembered that in their hurried exit from the supposed chamber of death, one of the gentlemen upset a candle. This had fallen against a sheet, which, blazing up, had set fire to the bed. By the time Dave therefore, discovered the fire, the whole of the two lower rooms, and a portion of the one-story passageway, leading to the main building, was in flames. It will also be remembered that Ellen was, at the time the fire began, asleep in one of the upper rooms.

She had not awakened until it was too late for her to escape, and now, as the resurrected Torm and his friends rushed across the lawn, she appeared, white and frightened, at one of the upper windows.

But, other eyes, more loving even than Torm's, had espied her also, and ere they had covered half the distance between the laundry and the West wing, a man on a large bay horse shot by them like the wind.

It was Buck Peyton. Ellen saw him, and as his voice rang out words of caution and encouragement, her shrill screams of terror ceased, and she became quiet and calm, although, the flames were, by this time, bursting through the floors and door-ways of the upper rooms.

Buck sprang from his horse ere the animal had well slackened speed, and his quick, keen eyes took in the perils and chances of the situation in a moment.

From the window to the ground was a sheer descent of twenty feet, and there was no ladder, or other means of ascending, except a slender lightning rod, running against the chimney, which projecting into the rooms of the West wing, was flush with the outer wall. At the point where the lower story ended, and the upper one began, was a narrow ledge, the width of the thickness of one brick. Seizing the lightning rod, Buck who was strong and active, soon ascended to this ledge.

Then, grasping the rod with one hand, and placing his feet carefully on the ledge, he swung himself around, until he was able to grasp the frame of the open window with his other hand. He then let go the rod, and worked himself slowly and cautiously along the ledge until he was opposite the window. In another moment, he was in the room, and held Ellen in his arms.

But there was no time to be lost in endearments. Already, the flames and smoke were filling the room, and the problem still remained to be solved as to how Ellen was to safely reach the ground. Buck's mind, however, was used to quick and active work. In an instant, he had dragged the quilts, blankets and sheets from the bed, and was tearing and knotting them firmly together. One end of this improvised cable, he fastened firmly under the arms, and around the body of the terrified, but now silent girl, and, by the time Torm and his friends had arrived under the window, he was swinging her over the sill. Ellen was no feather weight, and, with the flames scorching, and the smoke blinding him, it was no easy task to lower her safely into the eager arms, waiting to receive her, but pluck and strength accomplished it, and then Buck swung himself over the smoking window-sill and dropped to the ground, with only a bruised knee to show for his exertions. What, between the terror and the confusion of the occasion, and her amazement at being clasped in the arms of Torm's ghostly figure, Ellen, for the first time in her healthy young life, fainted, and was carried to the main house.

In the meantime, the negroes had come pouring from the house and quarters, and by the use of water, and ripping the shingles off the roof of the passageway, succeeded in saving the remainder of the mansion. The success of their efforts in this direction was due chiefly to the presence of mind and promptness of Buck Peyton, who worked like a Trojan.

Torm, dancing around in his shroud like Banquo's ghost, watched his cool, business-like and energetic movements with mixed feelings. At one moment, he was prepared to resent his efforts as an impertinent interference with his own concerns, and he was obstinate enough to hate to give in, even in the face of death, danger and fire. Still, in his own peculiar manner, he was very fond of Ellen, and had felt the recent estrangement more than he would have acknowledged to any living man. Next to Ellen, Panorama house was the very pride and joy of his existence, and now as he turned his eyes upon the major portion of the fine old pile, standing uninjured, his fiery eyes became suspiciously moist.

Moreover, a close acquaintance with chill-handed death will have a softening influence on the most stubborn of us, let us say what we will to the contrary.

While these conflicting feelings were raging in his breast, he had not opened his lips, except to swear at a negro from time to time.

Now, that all danger was past, Buck, whose pride was everyy whit equal to Dade's, turned away and limped over to his horse. Torm started after him, paused, hesitated, swore under his breath, and then blurted out:

"I say Peyton, stop and have a julep!"

A Julep was the Chotank olive-branch, as Peyton well know, but he was too wise a man to do more than accompany Dade and his friends in silence to the house. All the same, his well-scorched face glowed exultantly, and he drank his julep with a gusto and relish which raised him to such a pitch in Torm's opinion that he insisted on his going to a room, and having his burns treated by Aunt Easter.

Later, when to use Dave's expression "Dee wuz all clothed an' in dee right mine," Torm arose at the foot of the breakfast table, and lifted a brimming beaker, emerald-crowned.

"My friends," he said, "I am an obstinate man; it runs in the Dade blood. But, when a fellow has been as near death as I have been, and when my house and, my sister have been saved to me, by one man, I consider it time to knock under to that man. I drink to the health of my sister Nell and Mr. Buck Peyton, her future husband."

Ellen's fire-flushed cheeks took on an extra tinge of red, and Peyton's handsome face glowed, as the toast was drunk with enthusiasm. As Dave passed the plates of steaming oysters, Grimes asked:

"Dave, how in the world did you find out where Torm was this morning so quick?"

Dave grinned a drunken grin of pride: "Gawd! Marse George, I jes' reason dat out, 'cordin' to theology."

"Theology!" snorted his master. "Do you know what theology means?" To which question Dave retorted in fine scorn. "Know? 'Course I knows. 'Tain' nothin' 'tall but mother wit."